

before further advance is possible. The author is Educational Correspondent of the Sunday Times and was herself a teacher for over 20 years.

The scenes she portrays come from infant, junior, primary, educationally sub-normal, secondary modern and comprehensive schools or classes, a selection clearly based on the pathways actually trodden by the majority of average and below average pupils. There is no attempt to touch on the interesting fringes of this pattern — the nursery schools, the occupation centres, the approved schools, the technical schools or the grammar schools. The author is writing for the reader whose interest is in the broader problems of contemporary teaching in England rather than in the theory of educational administration.

In general, the scenes are set in contrasting pairs. In one, the problems characteristic of a particular type of school are shown from the viewpoints of the teacher; in the other, the same problems appear to be finding a solution.

Miss Gibberd is restrained not only in her style of writing but also commendably in resisting the temptation to draw even the obvious morals. Perhaps for this very reason, her faith in the ordinary teacher as a powerful social force stands out clearly throughout the book. Her book is rich in insight into the positive contribution which the teacher can make to the educational and social growth of his pupils.

Viewed as a kaleidoscope of scenes showing how good teachers handle a variety of difficult problems, each set characteristic of one type of English school, the book could be refreshing and suggestive to those teachers in England who have stayed, as many do, for the whole of their career in one type of school. But its greatest value will be to the less experienced teacher. For him it will fill out the formal descriptions and illustrate the arguments readily found in other books and in official documents, thereby providing a perspective of State education in England from the teachers' point of view which it is not easy to get. The same applies to the intelligent laymen and to teachers outside England.

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TITONE, RENZO, *Metodologia Didattica, I. Orientamenti e problemi*, (Enciclopedia della scienze dell'educazione 12, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Superiore di Pedagogia del Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano, Roma), Zürich; Pas-Verlag, 1963, pp. 550. Lit. 3000.—.

Les ouvrages de méthodologie générale sont aujourd'hui assez rares. Ceux qui existent peuvent se classer en deux grandes catégories: d'une part, les méthodologies auxquelles une conception déterminée, un "engagement" pédagogique donnent une épine dorsale et, d'autre part, les encyclopédies méthodologiques.

Ces deux types ont leur utilité. Le premier type doit normalement donner un choc régénérateur, même s'il ne suscite en nous qu'opposition, alors que le second oriente, dresse un inventaire, indique plus les sources qu'il ne les exploite.

L'ouvrage de Renzo Titone appartient à cette seconde catégorie. C'est un bon livre de référence sur lequel ceux qui désirent récapituler les mouvements méthodologiques qui concernent surtout la première moitié du XXe siècle, aimeront mettre immédiatement la main.

Le coeur du volume comprend deux parties:

I. *Orientations de la didactique contemporaine*: l'école active; "l'éducation

nouvelle", les systèmes centrés sur l'élève; l'autoactivité, la globalisation de l'apprentissage, l'individualisation de l'enseignement; la socialisation de l'enseignement et de l'éducation. Sous chacune de ces rubriques, l'oeuvre des pionniers est étudiée et les grands systèmes sont décrits.

II. *Problèmes généraux de l'enseignement*: finalité, sujet, objets, méthodes, enseignement systématique ou occasionnel, la leçon, les exercices, l'interrogation.

L'ordonnance de l'ouvrage est claire et les données bibliographiques sont très riches.

Mais ce gros ouvrage présente les défauts de ses qualités: à force de vouloir tout dire, on se borne souvent à effleurer les idées et les systèmes; en outre, qu'il s'agisse de mouvements ou de bibliographie, on aboutit à mettre sur le même pied des données de valeurs très diverses. Mais, nous le savons, cet écueil est difficilement évitable dans une oeuvre encyclopédique, l'auteur en est certainement le premier conscient.

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BANDET, J., (Ed.), *Les Débuts du Calcul*. Cahiers de pédagogie moderne. Paris: Ed. Bourrelrier 1962.

This publication is to be welcomed on two main counts. Firstly, it is in itself a succinct and practical account of some current innovations, both mathematical and psychological, in the early teaching of number. Secondly, and very significantly, it is recognised here – in an official publication of the French Education Department – that liberalising and modernising the teaching of mathematics, or indeed of any subject, can only be achieved if the teacher himself is allowed a greater degree of professional responsibility and freedom than is usually the case under highly centralised educational systems. Mlle. Bandet, *Inspectrice générale de l'Instruction Publique*, brings out this general point in her preface. It is inconceivable, she says, that the early teaching of number can be divorced from the psychology of number; and further, that, given the basic psychological and mathematical principles, the details of a teaching method will depend upon the abilities and interests of the teacher and the facilities she has available. The aim of the present publication is to present these principles to teachers at the *école maternelle* and *cours préparatoire* levels, and, according to their own individual needs, to help them to find their own personal method of teaching.

After a brief historical survey of number teaching in France (this forms a very interesting contrast to the approach propounded in this book), Mlle. Bandet continues Chapter I with a discussion of the evolution, logic and psychology of simple number concepts with the purpose of demonstrating how teaching method should be governed by these factors. For example, she shows that quantitative abstraction, leading to the formation of number concepts, depends first upon qualitative abstraction: i.e., objects must first be classified into sets of the same kind of object before it is possible to consider the number of elements in the set. This "vertical" structuring of mathematical concepts is clearly basic but in traditional teaching methods its realisation is left to chance: this is why Mlle. Bandet recommends the introduction of set theory concepts, in which this point, amongst others, is made explicit. However, she makes no claim to be introducing "modern mathematics into the kindergarten": rather, she talks of infants "playing at" sets. This is a slight pity since more serious attempts at introducing at least the structural